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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 439  
By Walley

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Jevon Kears, of the Tennessee Titans, on his selection as the National Football League Defensive Rookie of the Year.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is very proud of our beloved American Football Conference Champions Tennessee Titans and salute those players who led the team to its success; and

WHEREAS, Jevon Kears, who received much deserved accolades as the National Football League's Defensive Rookie of the Year, played an important role in our stingy defense; and

WHEREAS, born on September 3, 1976, Jevon played strong safety at North Fort Myers High School in Florida, and was highly praised for his efforts. He made 96 tackles, intercepted six passes, blocked four punts and caught 24 passes for 453 yards as a senior and returned four kickoffs for touchdowns in his high school career; and

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WHEREAS, he was honored as *USA Today* and *SuperPrep* High School All-American, All-State 5-A, District Most Valuable Player, and Area Defensive Player of the Year. He also was a National Honor Society member; and

WHEREAS, after being highly recruited, Jevon signed with the University of Florida and played safety before moving to outside linebacker; and

WHEREAS, as a freshman, he played in ten games, starting seven games, and registering 44 tackles, six for a loss, and made the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* All-Southeastern Conference Freshman team; and

WHEREAS, as a sophomore, Jevon played in all eleven games, starting three, racked up 47 tackles, six for a loss, and was an All-SEC selection; and

WHEREAS, as a junior, he started all 11 games, collected 54 tackles, six for a loss, and won Walter Camp and *Football News* All-American honors, was All-SEC, was a finalist for the prestigious Butkis Award, was named the Chuck Bednarik College Defensive Player of the Year, and the *Football News* National Defensive Player of the Year, and was a semifinalist for the Lombardi Award; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's first-round draft selection and the 16<sup>th</sup> overall pick, Jevon exploded onto the NFL scene in his first season, recording an AFC-best 14.5 sacks to set an NFL rookie record; and

WHEREAS, playing in every Titans game during the 1999-2000 season, he also led the league in forced fumbles with 10, and finished the regular season with 85 tackles and six passes defended; and

WHEREAS, Jevon also scored his first NFL touchdown on a 14-yard fumble return in the regular season finale against the Pittsburgh Steelers; and

WHEREAS, his excellent play and successful season were recognized when he was named a Pro Bowl starter for the American Football Conference; he is the first AFC rookie

defensive end to earn this rare honor, and the first rookie defensive end in the NFL selected as a starter since 1978; and

WHEREAS, this sensational super star was named to the *Associated Press* All-NFL First Team; received NFL Defensive Rookie of the Month honors for September, November, and December, thus becoming the first three-time winner of the award since its inception in 1996; was the first player to earn the NFL Defensive Rookie and Defensive Player of the Month accolades in the same month; and was recognized as the NFL Pass Rusher of the Year by the NFL Alumni Organization; and

WHEREAS, because he possesses unearthly talents that defy description, and skills so superior that onlookers can not help but stop and stare, Jevon has been given the nickname "The Freak"; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to pay tribute to the brilliant defensive efforts of Jevon Kearse, recognizing his numerous accomplishments; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor and congratulate Jevon Kearse on being named National Football League Defensive Rookie of the Year and helping lead the Tennessee Titans to the American Football Conference title and a trip to the Super Bowl.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we look forward to his continued success, both on the and off football field.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.